JESUS AND POLITICS

HAROLD B. SHEPHEARD

INTRODUCTION BY VIDA D. SCUDDER

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JESUS AND POLITICS

Jesus and Politics

An Essay
Towards an Ideal

By
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With Introduction by
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INTRODUCTION

In the crisis through which the civilised world is passing, the mere title of this book arrests sad attention: for it would seem as if Jesus had singularly little to do with politics in this year of His grace 1915. Nor are people lacking,—the author of this book would surely be among them,—to believe solemnly that the absence of effort to square the practice of nations with the law of Christ is responsible for the failure of our gracious formulæ, our self-confidence, our culture, and our morals. Civilisation was ad-

vancing so brilliantly, manners were acquiring such suavity, science was so increasing the conveniences and penetrating the secrets of life, learning was amassing so superb an equipment! Commerce throve, philanthropies were organised on a vast scale, fraternal sentiments were formulated in countless congresses and conventions, international courtesies were paraded the world over. And then, —the worst war in history burst upon us!

And the man on the street, shocked beyond measure, paralysed with honest horror, learns that this war is no sudden outbreak as he fain would think it, but the result

of long secret struggle, deliberately foreseen and prepared for by more than one of the warring powers; outward expression of an inward state that has been existing continuously under society's fair surface.

What can he conclude but that civilisation is powerless in itself to destroy the brute in man? He reflects. He perceives that the nations at their best have rarely looked beyond the limits of their own well-being, to the benefit of the whole world-order; that the sacrifice of the strong for the weak, a principle which struggles desperately for existence even in private lives, has never even been fairly contem-

plated as an ideal for national conduct. And he begins to wonder whether civilisation as such can ever be expected to protect man against his natural passions, or whether perhaps that holy and keen thinker, John Henry Newman, was right in regarding it almost as antichrist, as the arch-deceiver, the great enemy of the soul.

So sharp is the question raised that some sincere and brave Christian thinkers are beginning to assert boldly in public that the teachings of the New Testament were never intended to apply to corporate action, on the part of nations or of economic groups; that they are meant purely for individ-

ual use, and that international morality should not be expected to rise above the Old Testament law of equal justice, involving the right to retaliation and self-defence: an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. And surely this frank position is better than a facile assumption that the ideals of the Sermon on the Mount are universal, combined with easy-going connivance at the opposite policy. The world-anguish through which we are passing is a great disperser of delusions. Since August, 1914, it is no longer possible to entertain the false and dangerous belief that we are already members of a Christian world. It is good for us to

face the plain fact, that no nation and no social class has yet even dared pretend to shape its corporate policy by the words of Jesus. It is better even to defend that fact than to deny it!

Many of us, however, are not ready to defend or to acquiesce in it. We see that there is a restraining power in the world: a supernatural power, one is inclined in all simplicity to say, as one realises the fierceness of the instincts against which it has successfully contended. This power has proved itself by affording effective help to hundreds, nay thousands of people from generation to generation, in the age-long struggle to substitute

love for desire, meekness for self-assertion. So widely is it operative that any individual to-day who acted as the nations are acting in their corporate capacity would not only be heartily ashamed of himself but would be ostracised or boycotted in general society. Seeing the strength and tenacity of this power, we can not help believing that it can be extended in scope, and the only salvation we see for the world is in the application of it to political and economic life as well as to personal. Jesus and Politics! the very phrase brings to our minds relief.

We believe that we have good reasons for this hope of ours, that

politics shall yet be saved by Jesus. The great reason is of course that He is our Master and that He bade us pray that God's Kingdom should come on earth. He would never have told us to pray for an impossibility. That Kingdom was His social ideal. To found it was the official purpose of His life, from the day when He took up the mission of the Baptist and went about Galilee preaching the Good Tidings, to the great Forty Days when in the mystery of the Resurrection Light, He was with His disciples preaching and teaching the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God. To-day we realise that ideal as men have not done

since the first Christian ages: it shines against earth's stormy background with a heavenly radiance: it is the Land of Promise whither all true pilgrims must bend their way.

But can any one now live perfectly the life of a citizen of that Kingdom, according to its laws laid down in the Beatitudes and the following passages? No, we find that we can not. It is useless to hold before us the Counsels of Perfection for private life, at the same time telling us that society as a whole in its corporate divisions must not be expected to follow them. For we find that the laws of society at large determine our

own behaviour. What business man can be meek to the uttermost in his dealings with his competitors? Who can toss away all care for the morrow, with families dependent on him which would be thrown back as a public charge, did he reject the thrift, the efficiency, the practical foresight, which the world admires so much and which are so ignored in the words of Christ? What would happen if the employer of labor turned the other cheek to the labor-organisation, and went two miles with it in the matter of increased wages when they compelled him to go one? . . . The experiment would be interesting to try! The truth is

that private and public activities are so interwoven that it is impossible to separate them, and we shall fall into our present hopeless confusion just so long as we continue to apply the Beatitudes in the intimacies of personal life, but to let quite opposite principles regulate the large sections of our conduct in which the corporate attitude of class or nation is involved.

People have always realised the paradox and the more honest they were the more it drove them to desperation. There was an obvious solution, however; it was, to run away. That in part at least is what monasticism meant. In the cloister one could follow Christ

without reserve. Meanwhile it is worth noting that from the fourth century on, the large numbers of men impelled by similar instincts to seek conditions under which they could literally obey their Master, did not remain isolated. They gathered into highly organised communities, in which the laws of the Sermon on the Mount were to a large degree actually operative; and from these great and productive centres of Christian communism we have to-day much to learn. The monk of the best type did not bury himself in a sterile peace when he had fled from a predatory and violent world; he gathered like-minded hosts around him, and,

sharing all things in common with his brothers, he built roads and bridges, cultivated the land, and, incidentally to saving his soul, preserved literature for Europe. We shall not do ill to contemplate him. Yet, attempts to revive monasticism to-day hardly furnish us with the solution that we need.

How suggestively Mr. Shepheard discusses these difficult matters, and how clearly rings his voice! One welcomes in the first place the deep and complete spirituality of his little book. Like Carlyle before him, his distress over modern poverty is not because it entails suffering, and for improvement in material comfort as an end

in itself, he cares never a whit. In "this dying world," he is wholly intent on the fate of "that stranger companion, the soul," on his desire that it should attain to the life limitless. Our superficial philanthropies often distract us from this inward quest; they do not distract him, nor can he listen to the siren call of the more materialised socialist schools. The manufacture of souls, as Ruskin long ago put it, is the only product he cares for. But he sees that modern conditions are unfavourable to this industry, and that to give souls their due opportunity there is work to do, which can be accomplished only through

political means. Charity is not enough. "It can send the sick child into the country, but it can not plan healthy towns. Only political action can do that. . . . The Christian can not even give all that he has to the poor in charity. That would be only to pauperise the few whom he helps and to bring himself down to their miseries. Neither can pity lead him to go and live in the slums, slum-fashion; there would be only one man the more living wrongly. . . . There is only one way. . . . Only the common will can ensure that all shall be well-born. Only by political action can we give every soul

its perfect opportunity; only as politicians do our Christian duty perfectly."

It grows strangely clear as he proceeds, seeking with the humility of the disciple to read the Master's Mind. The deep distrust and fear of riches as inimical to spiritual well-being which breathes through the utterances of Jesus, causes so disinterested a Hebrew critic as Montefiore to blame Him as a partisan of the poor, almost as an embittered agitator. This description no one of His followers could endorse; yet there can be no question that Jesus does regard poverty as a safer and more blessed state than wealth. A generation that

says "Cursed are the poor," finds it hard to understand the first Beatitude. These pages clear away that confusion between the poverty we try to abolish, and that which Christ called Blessed, which has so afflicted Christian thought. People are known to invoke Christ's words as excuse for hardening their hearts against the misery of the tenement-house; though one observes them less often seeking to inherit the blessing for themselves, by altering their mode of life! But in truth, poverty did not to Christ mean mutilation, as it does to the slum-dweller. "It is a plain command,—to be poor in spirit, poor in fact—but He did not

say, 'Blessed are the halt, the maimed, the blind.' He spent His life in healing them, and called their disorders the work of devils. He loved that poverty which delivers from the desire of possessions, but He never praised the broken life."

How then can we obey His commands? What shall we do,—we Christians, who too many of us are occupied in trying to grow rich and, with our wealth, to secure for ourselves good conditions? The aim at least is clear: we have "to discover the means to make the right life possible without personal possessions; *poverty without disability.*" We moderns are rich

unnaturally or we are poor ignominiously. Our riches and our poverty are both wrong; when we are rich, keeping our wealth to ourselves, how hardly shall we pass through the needle's eye; when we are poor, starvation of mind and spirit beset us. Hundreds of conscience-smitten people, caught in a trap, restless, distressed, are helplessly aware of this dilemma. They read wistfully about St. Francis, but if they have commonsense, —one of the more usual modern virtues,—they see that they would do neither themselves nor anybody else any good by imitating him. They read about Tolstoy, and perceive sadly that right instincts of

love and duty toward his family prevented him from obeying his higher self and drove him broken-hearted to his grave.

For such people the direct frank words of Mr. Shepheard would seem to open an escape. It waits at the end of a long vista of political action: and the vista leads to a state in which personal possession shall be superseded by a commonwealth. Well and wisely Mr. Shepheard shows that we shall attain this state, not by setting Nature at defiance, but by following the true law of natural evolution.

Only in such a state can the other great precepts of the Gospels become practicable. Only there can

we hope for freedom from that care for the morrow which is so untrue to the Master's mind, and get rid forever of that corroding apprehension which has precipitated the great war of nations and which among individuals eats like a canker into all impulses of charity and love. Corporate meekness, the new law for industrial relations, will be competent to set us free from the vicious circle of industrial competition. "To find the political path by which mercy and meekness may inherit the earth,"—is not that an inspiring summons to the Christian mind of the next fifty years? Let us socialise the virtues! So only will

they be found practicable to the full.

Nor is the process unthinkable; for it has already begun. This book is splendidly hopeful. "I suppose that it is a grave sin for a Christian to pray, Thy Kingdom come, and disbelieve that his Lord's Will must revolutionise society" . . . The great movement is going on: the movement to tax and limit our private possessions. All we need is to make it more conscious, more deliberate, and to instil into it a fuller spirit of Christian joy. "To complete what is already begun we shall indeed have to give up still more of our personal possessions deliberately to

the common wealth, but that is the happy way of finding poverty. It would be a poverty which is not destitution, because the common wealth would be ours as every one's." This sounds practical: it is practical! No one can wholly obey the commands of Jesus to-day, for the Sermon on the Mount presupposes a fraternal society and only in such a society could it be followed perfectly. But we can square our personal conduct to His Will just so far as is possible without hurting other people; and then we can comfort our poor dissatisfied hearts and consciences, which are full of pain because this takes us such a little way and plunges us

into such constant inconsistencies, by uniting with all like-minded disciples to press by definite political means, determined through hard thinking and praying, toward the better day in which even in this dying world, we may all be free citizens together of the Kingdom of Heaven.

And when that day has come, "nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they make war any more."

VIDA D. SCUDDER.

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To Boanerges Anyone, Esq.,

My Dear Sir: I hear that you have entered politics, you who profess no religion. Do you not know that a man must be either a politician and religious, or politician and—forgive me—a fool?

I think I hear your roar of protest. But, will you glance through this book? It is not some private madness of my own, but a collection of things which are "in the air," things which Christians are beginning to rediscover in their faith, about life and politics. I venture to say that you have noth-

ing to put forward so much worth while, and irrefutable and thorough, as the politics of Jesus.

Respectfully yours,

THE AUTHOR.

To Mr. John Well-Worker,

My Dear Friend: You are certainly a Christian—your works prove it—but you seem to avoid talking politics, I suppose because you are so strong a party man and fear disagreements; and you hate social reform in the pulpit. But are you right? Did not Jesus mean us to agree together? and did He not perhaps give us, if we look closely enough and honestly, a common programme in face of the poverties and disabilities of others? Have we been passing by on the other side? I have tried to find

out what He meant. Will you read this book and see whether we cannot be agreed?

Faithfully yours,

THE AUTHOR.

JESUS AND POLITICS

I

Jesus and the Two Worlds

IT is no new thought that life is the concern of the soul but I suppose that those who live by it are still few. When a man is so busy in the shop at the front of the house he has no time to remember that he was a pilgrim, on the way to another land. "We have all forgotten who we are." The thought of a larger destiny may be the wonder of a quiet moment,

some comfort perhaps in mourning; but it does not go with us always. It is not so real to us—this clear consciousness of a spiritual life and of the world passing away—as to lift our habitual outlook to the plane where it is self-evident that nothing is so much worth while, for ourselves and others, as spiritual attainment; that our seventy years are not an end in themselves, but an adventure which leads elsewhere.

I do not only mean that this is an age which is absorbed in admiration of wealth and power. I mean that we Christians are in danger of forgetting the message of Jesus. I think we had lost sight of the

Jesus who lived ninteen hundred years ago in Palestine. Would it be too hard a thing to say that our forefathers were more concerned with what they believed about Him than with belief in Him, with orthodoxy, more than with His message? The pious founders of our churches bound them to hold dogmas about Him; they set Him in a plan—God's plan of salvation they called it—of predestination, justification, eternal punishment, a plan wonderfully unlike the spirit of Jesus. I think they had lost sight of Him. They knew Him through a creed; not Jesus as He was, but Jesus in a creed. But a new spirit is rediscovering Jesus for us.

Putting away for a time all the dogma which had grown up about Him it has gone back to the evangelists and has tried to learn afresh who Jesus was, what He said, what He meant; and, with many another rediscovery, it has brought home again to us His thought about the two worlds, about life's meaning. Like ourselves, His generation had forgotten its pilgrimage. From their earth-absorbed outlook men were seeing life falsely, setting their hearts upon dying things, riches, honours, outward observance, armaments; but Jesus saw things as they are. He saw the world passing away, and another world, real, vivid, over-

shadowing it, ready to break in upon it; the Kingdom of Heaven, at hand. The world's mortality was so plain to Him—He seemed to look for it to roll away like a scroll—that He was always talking of the end, and always praising those whose hearts were set on the Kingdom first, and crying woe upon the falsehood which hoped in power or praise; or enlarged its wealth; or lost its soul to gain the world. The spiritual life was the centre and meaning of everything; the treasure for which a man would spend all; the refuge from mortality. We who lapse from that daily atmosphere find it hard to hold His point of view. The world comes

to be first in our thought, the getting and spending of our seventy years; man becomes human, and present ends sufficient. But Jesus who never lost the consciousness of the two worlds could pronounce those truths which to-day search our hearts: "Blessed are ye poor": "Blessed are ye that hunger now": "Blessed are the merciful": "Blessed are ye when men shall revile you." And unblessed are the pushful, the unmerciful, those who "make good" in the sight of their generation; for they lay up treasure in a dying world.

His good news was that there is another life and order. Men are the sons of God: and God is a

Spirit: and life is man's adventure after spiritual gain. The fool pulls down his barns and builds greater, comforting himself with his security; but Jesus lived and thought and spoke on that plane where nothing is so real as the soul. He saw the truth—death, and man's possessions taken from him, but his spirit gone out to the right hand of God, or to the weeping and gnashing of teeth. What, then, should a man give in exchange for his soul?

To some, few and fortunate, the conviction of the supremacy of spirit is natural, as though they came into the world trailing the cloud of glory. They are the

"once-born" of the kingdom, the men who know, and need no other proof than their own life, which climbs up the inward ascent, through emotion and thought, intuition and spirit, to heights which rise always higher. That way lies the life limitless: it is not like the paths through the world which end in disappointment of ambition, or, if one wins the whole world, in failure of power, a drawing near to death: the broken roads and the final darkness are the plain warning that that way lies no thoroughfare for man's soul. It may be that the purpose of life is the rediscovery of the right way, of the impossibility of humanity's out-

ward satisfaction. But to many, not the fortunate and "once-born," it is not easy to attune their faith to the unworldliness of Jesus. It needs a new conversion, an overturning of life-long habit, and birth into another plane, to understand His whole mind. Even to the Christian the world may still seem more real than spirit. For we are like those Flat-land creatures—to use the old parallel—like pieces of paper moved across and up and down over a table, and round about each other, unaware of the hand which comes down from above, a hand they cannot see because they have only two dimensions and cannot look into

the above. So we may be hardly conscious of the Kingdom of Heaven, so real and vivid to Him, may hardly know that we have a soul, because it is hidden and we have been all eyes and ears and hands busy outwardly.

But there are many things, nearer than hands or feet, which are hidden from us until we search for them. Our own body is one of them. I live with my body; and it is part of myself: and yet I do not know all that it is doing: how I walk, or digest; how the blood is renewed in my breathing and circulates through arteries and veins, —no one knew that in all the history of the world until a few years

ago—nor how all day and all night, growing and changing and building up nerves and brain-cells and muscles, my body keeps me alive and in health. It is myself, but a hidden self.

We do not know all our mind. As I write I need only to think of what I am trying to say; but my hand writes of itself, and the words spell themselves. It must be I who write and spell: but I am not conscious of how I do it. As you read, the words pass by like the pictures of a cinematograph, each one flashing up and gone by, and somewhere within you they combine into sentences and meanings; but you are not conscious of how it

is done. One runs downstairs in the morning thinking of anything but one's feet. Who brings me safely downstairs? I do not; I never think about it. One has to stop and watch and become aware with surprise that a self of which we are not conscious is always managing us; while we are thinking of other things it lifts our hand, feeds us, leads us through crowded streets, finds the right notes on the piano while we are intent on the page of music: it does a hundred unnoticed things without our help, while our conscious mind is far away. It makes people walk in their sleep. It thinks and settles problems in the night.

It invented quaternions, and composed Tartini's "Devil's Trill"; and can in a good bank-clerk add up columns of figures with inhuman accuracy. It has its little habits, taps our fingers on the table, hums, fidgets, until some good friend corrects us. A woman sews, sews, and talks of fifty things, unconscious of the stitching; her other self is sewing. A child is saying a long piece; he seems to be just listening, rather anxiously, for any tangle, but the piece unwinds itself out of memory. I forget everything, but my hidden mind never forgets; it is that prodigious memory of a lifetime from which when I am old the little things

which happened long ago will come back.

In the same way we hardly know that we have a soul. There is something in us which is good or bad; but it is a hidden thing. Suppose that you sit down to think out whether you are a good man or not. No answer comes from your direct consciousness. You do not see your soul in shining white nor bespattered black; you are not conscious of a saintly self, nor a sinful; indeed, if you have any opinion of your goodness most likely it is sin, and many a saint believes himself a great sinner. Your soul is a stranger-companion. If you would know the truth about it you

must needs sit still and wait and see what comes up from within, what desires, what interests, what impulse to good deeds. You must know your soul and judge your soul, as you judge other people; not by direct sight of their inner state, but by their actions; if they do good, then are they good, but if evil, evil. No man has seen his soul at any time: and yet it is there, in the invisible dimension; it is ourself, because in us it does good or evil. It follows with us always, a spirit hidden in some depth of life into which we cannot look.

But as we become aware of our unseen bodily life by pain in ill-health; and as the thoughts and

memories which stream up from it prove to us the existence of a hidden mental life, so do we become conscious of our soul by the trouble into which it throws us. We are uneasy, remorseful; our soul hates the thing we did and troubles us about it. Or suddenly we have an impulse to a kindness; our "better self" sends us out upon the good errand. Or we do evil against our will; our sick soul overwhelmed our judgment. Or, after years of sin, in a moment, a new soul sweeps up,—a soul we never dreamed that we possessed—and carries us away into a changed life where even the desire of sin is buried for ever.

We feed our body with plain

food and fresh air and exercise, and unseen, by hidden processes, it becomes strong and healthy: wē feed our mind with thinking and knowledge, and unseen too, by hidden processes, it becomes active and rich. And we make our own soul: I, the keeper at the gate of Self, stand there and see all that go by in the street of experience; and some I call in and welcome; and against some, if I am wise, the ugly and base, I bar the door: for whatever goes in meets with the secret Person in my house and does him good or evil. And at the door I see those that pass out of my house, the messengers from the Person within; some I do not like

and turn them back again; but others I send forth gladly. So I watch over my secret soul, as though it were a dear child, or a great lord, who may be hurt by wrong-doers. For all the time whatever goes in changes the soul, unawares, by hidden processes, and we discover suddenly that we have grown better or worse. The soul, in secret, changes every day. It becomes Character, what We are. It will go with us, as we have made it, for ever.

Why do I say "for ever"? Because I know of nothing which can destroy the soul. Death is the disease of the body. It is always the destruction of bodily things by bod-

ily; of flesh by wounds or disease. But the soul in its bodiless dimension has no body to be hurt. One cannot stab nor shoot even a thought. An emotion cannot fall sick of a disease. Death cannot touch a soul. It may break down the walls of the house of flesh, but the soul lives safe beyond the world where death is.

The hidden, spiritual life is our reality, what we are; our chief concern therefore in all men. Character matters most, what men are, not what they possess. We come back to the note of Jesus, to the unworldliness about which He never reasoned but spoke with authority, the wisdom which grows upon

every man who thinks out his life with its outward blind alleys, and its limitless inward progress; its outward dyings, and spiritual indestructibility. For which then should men live?

If the inward life were only an earthly thing of the two worlds it would still be the more valuable; for what a man is must be more to him than what he has. Outward accidents cannot spoil his life whose strength is from within. Whether it survives bodily death or not, character is better than possessions; the soul more precious than the world. But, far more, if death is only the dissolution of the body, and if, should we live beyond bod-

ily death, we must be still ourselves —how can we be anything else?— the same in character and desire, then Jesus was right. What a man is, what he is becoming, matters eternally. Was it not this that He meant by "laying up treasure in Heaven"? He did not say that every good deed done and every sin is entered up by the recording angels in the Book of Life, and our balance struck and paid in heavenly enjoyments. That was not His way of thinking. But He meant, one imagines, that by every good deed done a man becomes better, and by every evil deed worse; that we change our soul by every thought and desire unrestrained;

that so we prepare a spiritual fate far more important than anything which may befall us here; that nothing therefore matters so much, for ourselves or others, as spiritual attainment.

Men have always sought a satisfaction that will not change and fail as earthly things do. The saints lived in the presence of the other world. They were so conscious of it that the natural world lost all its claim, except for pity and help of other lives; and lesser Christians sing the simple hymns of faith, about the heavenly home, the sojourning and pilgrimage here, of our citizenship of another country, with an emotion they

hardly understand. Very often they have proved the mystery true by their lives changed to heroic confidence; and when the words of Jesus are understood the hearts of the simple answer instantly, as though they had known it before. But He Himself saw clearly, as noonday, that which to us is only dim. He lived on the plane where the two worlds are self-evident; the one passing away; the other a spiritual life. His talk was of the Kingdom of Heaven, beyond and within us; of the prodigal and his homeward longing. He was always unworldly. To Him life was always the concern of the soul.

II

The Christian and Politics

THOUGH it may seem at first sight a paradox, the very unworldliness which Christians learn from Jesus makes politics possible to them. In one sense it might be true to say that Jesus had no politics. He who could have given men the perfect government which had been so long dreamed of refused the outspread kingdoms of the world. That may seem strange to us who are so busy with organised means

and parties, but to Him man's social troubles were spiritually caused, and spiritually healed. "For from within, out of the heart of man, proceed the evil thoughts, thefts, covetousness," which are the origins of social wrong; and from within, out of the heart of man, the Kingdom of Heaven comes out into the world and clothes itself, if you will, in Acts of Parliament. But the spiritual deliverance is first. The pure in heart will vote right. But to begin from without, to put politics first, as though men were made good by Act of Parliament, is to begin at the wrong end. While there is one covetous heart left social injus-

tice will still be done. Again, it was self-evident to Jesus, as it is not always to us, that man does not live by bread alone. Our politics are liable to the false hope that if only the disabilities and oppressions of the people were removed and every man had a living wage, short hours, and healthy surroundings, then should we all be happy. But it would not be so. Obviously not; there are those who have everything and yet are miserable. The people are souls, restless until they find rest in God, a truth which fools may deride, but which proves itself again and again, not only in the experience of mystics, but in the flow of life itself in generations,

like that which is passing now, which have tried to find happiness in prosperity and now are wonderfully, half unconsciously, moved by ideals of peace and goodwill which have their source in the pressure of spiritual dissatisfaction. Unconscious with them, to Jesus and to those who understood His secret of the Kingdom it was self-evident in experience that their power to meet life was given them in those hours, the long night of prayer upon the mountain or the preparation in retirement, when they came near to the spiritual world, and power flowed into them and the contentment of a life which no outward want could spoil. In that

knowledge it seemed to them not worth while to strive by outward means; they only longed to bring home to other men the truth, self-evident to them, that we are restless until we find our home, here, and now, in the overshadowing world of spirit.

Nevertheless, and this is the complement of the other truth, the Christian life is not only contemplative, not content to wait always upon its spiritual source, but active. Jesus came down from the mountains to heal their bodily diseases. Life which does not go out to others is dead. And it is their very preferring of the spiritual before all else which makes politics

possible to Christians. Political hopes which expect only earthly happiness are impossible to those who with Jesus have seen the world passing away. The Kingdom is "in the Heavens," of another order; spiritual. But if life is the concern of the soul it matters a great deal that every soul should have its opportunity.

It matters that it should be well-born into a healthy body. If the people were only so many hands at work, so many mouths to feed, it would be still vital, from any point of view, military, industrial, æsthetic; much more if the inward life is the precious and surviving reality; the body is the house of

the soul; ill-born it may be the poor soul's burden through all its experience here.

It matters that the people should be well fed and housed. Starved and in bad surroundings no man can be himself. Harassed by the care of finding somehow daily bread not even the saint escapes temptation and distraction from God. "Brother Body," sick and hungry, drives men to sin. And for the sake of their eternal part it matters that the people should be educated, for the mind feeds the inward life; and they must have leisure, for some are so busy that they never have time to rest, and discover that they had a soul.

But to clothe the naked, and feed the hungry, and set free the prisoned soul, means political action. Charity is not enough. One has heard it said, with a strange perversion of thought, that the poor are always with us, for the exercise of our charitable virtues. As though God created them for our salvation! As though His chosen few were to be perfected by the sufferings of these sad vessels of wrath! Such words are the product of religious vanity, or perhaps an unconsciously convenient excuse for keeping other people in the station of life to which we say that it has pleased Almighty God to call them. The Christian's duty is

something less agreeable; it involves soiling our hands with politics and digging down to the roots of the social evils which create the objects of our charity; not neglecting the easier virtue, but doing justly and believing uncompromisingly that any soul is worth as much as our own. And one must go beyond that; for Jesus never commended bare justice, the eye for an eye, the tooth for a tooth, but the real charity which is not puffed up with the sense of its virtue, seeks not its own salvation, and though it gives all its goods to feed the poor knows that it profits nothing without the love which is willing to give away even its rights.

One begins with charity—for every little child has a charitable heart; when we first heard about the ragged and hungry, we were quick to give, a dinner to waifs perhaps, or a precious penny in the plate. It seemed the only way to ease our heart. Or if later we gave service and listened to the tale of unfortunate and narrowed lives, of wrongs and mistakes, and tried to find a remedy in charity, whether it were money or service, we grew discontented. True, sufferings were relieved and some were drawn out of hopelessness and sent away upon a new life. Charity was a light in dark places. But the dark places were still there. We were

challenged to something greater than charity. The sovereign tinkled in the plate with a note of mockery. What can money do? Or service? We remember that they paraded our streets with a banner which damned our charity. We saw that charity will never help Lazarus to get up and go away from the gate: he sits all the closer waiting for another dole. But the real evil which made him a beggar we had not touched. Charity is a palliative, not a cure; a salving of conscience, not a complete Christianity. It eases the pain, but only masks the disease. It can give the unemployed food and clothing, but cannot cure unemployment. It

can send the sick child into the country to recover from the diseases of over-crowding, but it cannot plan healthy towns. Only political action can do that. Charity can advise the poor man cursed with a wife whose drunkenness and unfaithfulness are destroying his children that divorce will cost him a sum which he is never likely to possess; but only the conscience of the community can bring the remedy within his means. Charity may turn the eyes of the suffering to a recompense above, but it can never change earth into heaven, nor even into a tolerable purgatory for some. The Christian cannot even give all that he

has to the poor, in charity. That would be only to pauperise the few whom he helps and to bring himself down to their miseries. Neither can pity lead him to go and live in the slums, slum-fashion; there would be only one man the more living wrongly. There is only one way. Does he believe that every man should have the good health which he enjoys? Then for that they need open country. Only an Act of the Legislature can bring the people back to the land. Or he believes that every clever boy and girl should have the chance of the best education? Only political action can set up the secondary system which

leads from the Common Schools to the University. Or, that every soul should have an equal chance? But the race is unequally handicapped. No charity nor private effort can start the low-born where the gentleman begins. Only the common will can ensure that all shall be well-born. Only by political action can we give every soul its perfect opportunity; only as politicians do our Christian duty perfectly.

III

The Churches and Party Politics

BUT now we Christians have to accuse one another. Ours is one faith, the faith of our Lord. We are all for the Kingdom of Heaven. We all believe that life is the concern of the soul: we would all understand our Lord's will and do it. But we are divided politically. There are men who worship in the same church with us to whom we cannot talk politics, except jokingly, because of our

divisions. They believe in every political thing which we abhor, and are estranged from us; and yet they have the same Lord, and the same pity at heart.

We came by the political prejudices which separate us ignorantly and ingloriously. How many of us are Republicans for instance because we have studied the thing for ourselves? Have we ever read the history of the former Republican Party and how it came into existence and was transmuted. Much more, have we ever referred the G. O. P. to our Christian principles? Are we Tariff Reformers because we are Christians? or did we take up Progressivism or Tar-

iff Reform or Votes for Women because the party bosses made it a party cry and we discovered arguments for our beliefs from the party newspapers afterwards, with their suppressions and half-truths?

Or, our political prejudices are the result of our circumstances. If I am the son of a God-fearing land owner and have seen him deal justly with his tenants because he was a Christian, how can I really understand the Christian Socialist? If I have been brought up in a New England and strongly anti-Catholic home, the head of the Mormon Church and Cardinals of Rome seem to me very strange kinds of Christians. Yet I dare not deny

their Christianity. Or, if I am a Syndicalist there seems to be a great gulf of misunderstanding between me and the Christian employer. My prejudices of party, or of outlook, cut me off from other Christians. Yet many of them have given up more for their faith than ever I did.

Our Lord prayed that we might be one, but we are broken into parties. The Enemy has known how to divide us and rule. It may be hard to fix our eyes steadily upon the vision of one creed, common in all its detail and implication, but we have no excuse that we have not together healed the sick and comforted the miserable. Long ago

the Church, reunited in action, might have overcome the world.

Not that we are so little-minded as to believe that our political opponents are rogues. The Christian thinks no evil. But the mote in our brother's eye is so obvious, and it must interfere with his sight, and it is our duty to tell him of it. The Baptists, for instance, think so much of John Smyth, the Presbyterians of Calvin, and the Methodists of Wesley. If we could have a sectarian holiday, only for a year, we should be a long way towards peace. There are still disabilities; in England they still think that a "dissenter" is not fit to hold a doctor's degree in divin-

ity at Oxford, but such wrongs are not mitigated by recalling a bitterness two hundred and fifty years past; nor by hard words about bishops; nor by self-praise of the voluntary system. Too eloquent virtues offend friendship; and we are told to turn the other cheek. Our church, Church Catholic or Little Bethel, must not grow to be the false figure of the Kingdom of Heaven, lest we become partisans first, the Sons of the Kingdom by after-thought.

The danger is greatest in politics because no constant reminder is found there of a spiritual purpose. It is thought to be bad taste to speak of religious conviction on the

platform, as though it savoured of cant, and as though politics were irreligious. That is perhaps why there is a revolt against "politics in the pulpit," a feeling that somehow politics are lower in motive, incongruous almost in those who stand for the highest ideals. And it is true that in political controversies Christianity has lost its charity; we have drawn apart guiltily, doubting whether we do not need a new consciousness of the forgotten life; a rediscovery of the common ground, instead of hard words. While we were falling foul of one another the world has been wondering how these Christians love one another.

What can we do to remove our divisions? We can examine and suspect our strongest party convictions and ask ourselves how we came by them; what ground in our faith we have for them; and whether that faith excludes the opponent's view. And is our motive pure, or is it complicated with business interests? Or are we following a cry? In the end, do we support this measure or that, this party programme or another, only because it is for the advantage of the Kingdom? Are ours those spiritual politics which lay up eternal gain, or have they only a mortal ideal?

We can encourage in ourselves

and others the open mind and heart, to try and understand the outlook and convictions of others, and never to hate nor despise those who differ from us. The open mind and heart will mean open speech. We shall not be afraid to talk politics with the Christian of the other party, nor be ashamed to let him see that politics are more to us than party spirit, though simply and without suspicion of cant: neither shall we be pharisaical. We shall not be disappointed. The Christian in him responds; we shall come to understand each other, at last it will end in common action.

We shall not be afraid of our own party, though they call us

lukewarm and unpractical. Only spiritual results are practical. Death makes all other ends foolishness. Besides, the Kingdom is first and last for us. There must always be parties, but we have no use for the spirit which in practice admits no good, not even in the better man, on the other side.

We can pray and talk together, whatever our politics may be, or our social condition. When men pray together in simple sincerity there can be no bitterness in their talk; underneath the outward difference the inward community makes us sure of one another. There is one life, though it express itself in many forms, and for all of

us the Kingdom is at hand. We would discover together how to make it a real presence. As we become sure of one another there will grow up a common will among those who have seen the two worlds and believe that politics are the quest of character and not of possessions.

It is not a dream: it has been proved strangely easy for Christians of opposite extremes to come together under a common loyalty to Jesus and work out their social duty. Perhaps it is still too early for programmes; but we know what we have to face together.

IV

"Blessed are Ye Poor"

BUT is there in the teaching of Jesus any foreshadowing of a social ideal? What had He to say about how men should live rightly together?

Consider what He taught, about poverty and riches. "Blessed are the poor in spirit": happy are they, whether rich or poor, who have no heart for riches, whose spirit is at liberty for the inward life. Unhappy are they, whether poor or rich, whose soul falls under the

glamour of possessions and is turned away from God.

But there is another rendering of the same saying—"Blessed are ye poor": "Blessed are ye that hunger now": as though Jesus intended an even higher counsel of perfection; that even if a man can be sure of his own heart, yet it is best to be poor in fact; as He Himself was, and as the great saints were. It is a hard saying, but the Christian needs above all to persuade himself and the world of the truth which Jesus taught, even as it seems to us to extravagance, that man's whole life must be centred in the soul; that what he has is nothing to be compared with what

he is; for what we have death takes from us, but what we are goes with us always; it is the treasure laid up in Heaven. He meant, simply and really, what He said. Happy are the poor, in spirit and in fact, because they have only the Kingdom of Heaven.

We have been afraid to profess His teaching, or half-hearted about it. We have told the children to get on in life, and by getting on have meant getting money, or making a name for themselves. When little Anne, passing through Cavendish Square, wished that she might be very rich like the great lady in the chariot, if we had only told the truth and said that the

charioted lady was no happier than little Anne! little Anne would have begun to give up wanting chariots, to her eternal advantage. Happiness is not having, but being. We used to commend self-help to the poor, but never made it plain that self-help does not mean helping yourself to whatever you can lay your hands on, but helping your soul, yourself. Nor yet have we raised up a saner generation with an ambition to be somebody in themselves, not somebody in the newspapers, not misled into scrambling to the top of the heap anyhow.

We have no right to read His comfortable sayings and turn over the page at the sixth chapter of St.

Luke's Gospel; nor pass it by as a counsel of perfection. He bade us be perfect. We may not say that it can never be; He Himself was very poor, and many others in His example. It is a plain command, to be poor in spirit, poor in fact.

To be poor in spirit, poor in fact —but He did not say: Blessed are the halt, the maimed, the blind. He spent His life in healing them, and called their disorders the work of devils. He loved that poverty which delivers from the desire of possessions and turns men to God, but He never praised the broken life. He would not have commended the condition of those who to-day are crippled by inefficient

bodies or overcrowding and long hours of work, who, but for the grace of God, are incapable of abundant life. They are like the blind whose eyes He opened, because they can have no eyes nor heart for the things which He said were more than meat and drink. They can never hope for the opportunities which make men whole, but go under and die and stand before the throne of God and tell Him that they never had a chance. With us it is a matter of money, and they have no money. There are eight million men in Great Britain, for instance, whose average wage is only twenty-five shillings (six dollars) a week; and

it is a fact, surely unrealised, that only one-ninth part of the population of that country belongs to families whose income is more than £170 ($850.00) a year; not to speak of the destitute sixteen per cent. of the people of Glasgow living in one-room tenements or the men and women sleeping under the railway arches and in the parks of the cities every winter night, "naked and sick and in prison."

He did not say: Be poor, and ignorant and unhealthy, but: "Be thou made whole." If we make war upon ignorance and disease, much more did He; but the difference is that we try to deliver ourselves by forgetting His other ideal,

of poverty; by growing rich, and out of our wealth buying good conditions; while He always remembered the deceit of possessions, the fate of the man who pulled down his barns to build greater. An added evil is no cure: to escape from want to riches is to pass from one danger to another. While we rightly demand good conditions, we have to keep always in mind every man's need of poverty. That was His thought, however strange it seems; that men should be whole, and poor. Somehow, if we are to stand fast in His thought, we have to make the right life possible without personal possessions; poverty possible without disability.

It is not so now: poverty to-day is a curse and not a blessing. We compel men, if they would be whole, to struggle for the personal possessions which He forbade, and we deny the best of life to those who obey His command to be poor. Our life is wrong; for, quite plainly—and I do not see that there is any honest escape—to His mind the ideal is a poverty which enjoys the right conditions which to-day only wealth can win; for the soul's sake: and, though it seems all but impossible, it must be the Christian's ideal if it was His. Our politics must look to that seeming impossibility as their goal. Strange it may be, but then He saw

life as we do not often and His ideals become ours only at those highest moments when we forget what at other times we call our common sense and rise nearer to the level of His consciousness. Jesus went to the heart of the matter: it is good to be poor, to be delivered from the desire of dying things, for the soul's sake: and, for the soul's sake, no man must live the broken life. We must be poor without starvation of body or mind or spirit; poor without disability; somehow so change our ideals and ways that it shall be possible to have no personal wealth to lead us astray, and still to lack nothing that is necessary to the perfect life.

V

Right Poverty

AFTER all, that is the natural condition of God's creatures; of the birds, for instance, whom He bade us consider. Theirs is the holy poverty which had no personal possessions. But the robin who nests in the corner bush has no disabilities; she is free of the wealth of all my garden and my neighbour's. In the early summer, when her fledglings are hungry and she forgets to be afraid, she invades my house, hops on the

breakfast table, and helps herself to the butter. She has no idea of deprivation. She is as God made her, and as, I suppose, He made man to be, poor, without personal possessions; but she lacks nothing. The whole world is free to her.

But I am rich unnaturally. There is a fence all round my garden and no human being ventures in without my permission. Nature never built a fence in all the history of the world, but she gives everything, land and water and air, to every creature. When I buy consols the Bank of England is prepared with a ritual administered by a multitude of obstructive clerks all to prevent any other person from

coming near the little bit of riches which I have appropriated; but there is no such exclusion and possession in nature, nor, I suppose, among the angels of God in the seven heavens. Every natural creature, though it possesses nothing, enjoys the whole world. Man, in his societies, alone tries to be rich, and has ended in making himself for the most part miserably poor.

In fact humanity has turned down a blind alley of social evolution away from nature's path. Long ago nature learned all that is to be known about perfect social conditions. She has often made happy communities. The bees,

who live by instinct, and therefore by the direct impulse of life, long ago created the communities of which we dream, where every member in perfect personal poverty enjoys the whole hive. But we are still involved in difficulties because we have not yet rediscovered the paradox of the natural life; of allowing to every man, not personal possession, but the common wealth. Doubtless it is our original sin, the desire to possess the creatures for oneself, of which the mystics speak as the origin of the soul's fall from Heaven. But whether we ascend into Heaven for origins or not, at least our social conditions are contrary to life's practice; and con-

trary to the thought of Jesus; and no one will say that we have made of them anything but a failure: for our riches and poverty are both wrong; when we are rich, keeping our wealth to ourselves, how hardly can we pass through the needle's eye; and when we are poor good conditions are forbidden us. Each for himself is forced to get what he can of the world's opportunities. Life becomes a struggle; an unconscious enmity with other men; unhappiness to the Christian who has found out the fact and knows how poverty makes men halt and maimed and blind of soul. Everywhere his failure meets him: every man he meets is a reproach.

Early astir in the morning is the boy who goes from door to door delivering newspapers. He is an example which walks in every day through our gate, not an extravagant case, but a fair instance, of how under this fate of personal possessions life is crippled. His clothes are poor, his boots rather worse. He himself looks healthy, but not well-grown, and only comparatively washed. He hurries, when he catches our critical eye, because he should get home to go to the Public School. He is not one of the outcasts of the world by any means, but he will never have the chance which our richer children have. At sixteen he will go to

work, after receiving an incomplete education at a school where he will not have met the best boys whose company we others buy for our sons if we can, and where he will not have learnt those manners which we believe in so strongly. He will become perhaps an office-boy, doing dull work, meeting all kinds of men, some foul-mouthed, some gamblers and drinkers, and getting home too tired to have much interest in anything else. Presently he will rise to be a clerk, with better wages and hours, but sinking into that narrow outlook which is the inevitable result of the lives of so many thousands like himself. The half of his possibilities will

never be aroused. He will never be what he might have been if training at the great school and the university, where life and thought are set before us, had been free to all, and not the privilege of personal riches. True, there are some who do a great deal for him. He belongs to a boys' brigade or a club, where they give all their spare time to teaching him responsibility and discipline and straight living; all good indeed, but only charity; and perhaps his worst fate is that he will not rebel, will take it as a matter of course that he had no better chance; or perhaps will fall into that last evil of the middle class, will look down on those less for-

tunate than himself, and become a snob in his own way. A narrow life, and there are thousands who live like that.

What is it that closes the world against the newsboy? The privilege of personal possessions: the system which prevents a man making the best of himself unless he breaks our Lord's command to be poor; the loss, even from our political dreams, of the natural ideal of poverty without disability. In plain words, under present social conditions a man can hardly be a Christian. He must offend, however much against his will, the greater commandments of Jesus. If he is rich, how hardly can he

escape the absorption of wealth, or be blessed by poverty. If he is poor, he may be forced to starve the mind and heart with which men serve and love God. Our social system compels him to failure.

Consider again: what we have been saying may seem extravagant, but it is a matter of spiritual life, and they were not strange ideas of our own which we were using, but the thoughts of Jesus about how men save their souls. He often spoke of the danger of riches; the anxiety for to-morrow; that we may not lay by enough for old age and bring up our children well. He knew how that trouble grows into an absorption of the whole self

and leads a man unconsciously to live as though life were a matter of getting rich; as though the possessions which every man must one day leave behind were more than character. Or at least that fear of wronging and disabling those near to us prevents the indifference to riches which He praised. If only we could be poor without fear!

But, now, if it were possible, if good conditions were free to the poorest, the care for riches which distracts men from God would be past. If it were possible to build up a society where these things were not bought and sold but were ours and every man's as common wealth, then we could live the life

He praised; in perfect personal poverty, like His other creatures.

It is not impossible. It is already realised in part. Some common wealth, of bare necessities, already exists among us, and increases; there are not a few good things which we enjoy together, however poor we are. We have only to go on as we have begun, but with a fuller consciousness of purpose. For whether we desired it or not, the spirit of Jesus has been abroad and has been speaking in unexpected places. The ideal of personal wealth is a little shaken now. It occurs to us that the pursuit of it is not so admirable. The eager money-getter is conscious of

it himself, and defends himself on the ground that his wealth employs and benefits others. He finds it necessary to excuse himself, and there are some always ready to demand his defence. He cannot say simply that his wealth is his and he can do what he likes with it. Personal possessions are no longer sacred. There is the income-tax, for instance, and death duties: they take away our personal possessions and pay them into a common wealth. The rates and taxes provide that part of the world and its privileges which is open to every one; the right to personal safety, through the military and police forces; the means of communica-

tion, through the Post Office and highways; and some education, through primary and secondary schools. These are the things which already any man may enjoy however poor he is, created by the limitation of personal riches. The established principles of taxation tend towards the ideal which seemed so far off, and the movement which may have been unconscious is becoming deliberate. There is talk of increasing the common wealth, of extending public education, and housing reform, and provision for old age and against sickness and want of work, by the establishment of public funds and by nationalisation, or by increasing

the powers of the community to interfere with personal property. The common wealth, the possibility of enjoying good conditions, and still being poor, grows always larger. As the ideals of to-day come to realisation we shall be very near conditions under which we shall be poor without disability.

The movement is obvious, but we need to make it conscious, deliberate. The Christian logic of it is clear. Only by taxing and limiting our private possessions and by providing a common wealth with which to establish healthy conditions and wider education, and opportunity free to the poorest, can the world be opened to the less for-

tunate of our fellows. To complete what is already begun we shall indeed have to give up still more of our personal possessions, deliberately, to the common wealth; but that is the happy way of finding poverty. But it would be a poverty which is not destitution, because the common wealth would be ours as every one's. And if we see the two worlds as Jesus did, and realise that for the soul's sake which lives beyond bodily death it matters immensely whether men are starved in body or mind, or full-grown to live out the best in them, then we are not guiltless until we are glad to be poor with all men, and rich, with them, in common.

VI

"Blessed Are the Meek"

AGAIN, He said: "Blessed are the merciful"; "Blessed are the meek"—the sons of God, and the inheritors of the earth—and disclosed a political economy altogether revolutionary. The meek tradesmen goes into the bankruptcy court: the merciful employer makes little profits. If big men and small men in the City of London were all meek and merciful together, and every lawyer turned the other cheek and agreed quickly

with his adversary while in the way with him, and if every stock-broker mercifully told every other broker all that he knew about a stock, the foundations of commerce would be shaken. And yet these few words mean that and more. With the simplicity of those who have seen the heart of things, Jesus proclaimed a morality contradictory to the fundamental laws of evolution. This world was made, not by mercy and meekness, but by nature red in tooth and claw; by the survival of the strongest, and by fierce competition; and human society has grown up out of battle and murder and sudden death: the miracle is, not that there is so much that is un-

merciful and fierce in the earning of our bread, but that there is in it any pity and love at all. What there may be began from Jesus. Hardly could our faith venture to believe in a new economy unless we had already seen His work upon the world.

More immediately our commercial system is the outcome of the last century of *laissez faire*. Liberalism sixty years ago held that every man must be free to exercise his abilities and wealth unrestrained, except from crime: give men liberty, it was said, and the deserving will rise to the top. But so did the cruel and hard of heart. They compelled young children to

work in factories, and women to haul coal all but naked in mines. And there was room for only a few in the high places; the rest went under; until the merciful could bear it no longer and a great agitation forced the community to become, in the person of the factory inspector or arbitrator of trade disputes, the visible conscience of Christian morality. But we are still compelled, lest we starve, to live by the loss of others. As we go up, they go down: as we get custom, they often lose it. Our good bargains are their failures. We win our suit and they pay the costs; everywhere there are people struggling for the same small job. If we

were really merciful we should forgive every debtor his debt—as God forgives us; should never go to a bargain-sale; never try to cut out a trade rival; never do the very many things which every one does, and by the not doing of which the real Christian stands convicted as an eccentric. The world has still very little use for His perfect men, except perhaps in the monastery or the workhouse.

The Christian who sees life as the concern of the soul can only say: So much the worse for the world; that way man goes down to the beasts. He hates every form of war and is eager to find the escape from individualism and

from the old law of the survival of brute strength and cunning, in commerce and business, because he is a Christian and not the slave of the world.

The immorality of the commercial system is a common-place theme, and I am not trying to persuade the convinced. But there are Christians to whom the blessing of mercy and meekness still seems only a domestic matter; a commendation of gentleness in conduct and restraint of temper; saying kind words and kindly doing. But the Christian life is not so partial and tame. It is heroic. It saves the world, man in all his relations: in business, as at home; and

no one can be perfectly Christian in an unchristian world, nor divide his life and be safe. Mercy must become possible in every relation.

How that may be has, of course, long occupied men's thoughts. The root evil is known to be individualism, the "each for himself." One need not insist upon it: it is the necessity of looking after oneself against others which makes men merciless and violent. We feel that we have to live; and to live must hustle; and if we hustle, some one goes to the wall.

But now, it is possible, under circumstances, to be diligent in business, to do with all our might what our hand finds to do, and still not to

hurt any one else. For example, in any large concern, every manager and clerk, from the top to the bottom, may work with all his might at his particular duty and do no injury to another clerk at his different duty. On the contrary, the good work of one helps the other; and the good work of all prospers the business: and if the business prospers all share in its prosperity, for wages rise and there are bonuses or a share in profits for each. Internally a business need never be a strife, but is often a mutual benefit. It is an organism, a single life; a body and members who enjoy its good health. The concern in itself may have a real

Christian morality: a score of men, or even hundreds, living together in one interest. Only externally, in the rivalry of business with business, does the struggle continue.

But now once more, the business may combine, by agreeing prices and outputs, with other concerns, to limit their rivalry; or a trust is formed to control perhaps several combinations. While the trust may still be at war with the public or with another trust, the little group has been enlarged into a multitude; all released from the fiercer forms of competition, by a community of interest. Not, maybe, with any conscious Christian impulse, the movement indicates a

way of salvation. Not long ago the Scotch railways were in keen rivalry, cutting rates, racing, and damaging each other's profits. Now, under a measure of understanding, conference of managers, and a general railway policy, their competition ceases. As by absorption in a common concern it is possible in the small business for a few men to live together Christianly, so for a greater number in a greater organisation; and for a very large number under the largest combinations.

Then, to bring about the same release from the evils of unrestrained individualism in all business, to create a commercial mercy

national in extent, there needs only the last, and logical, and seemingly inevitable, step to a general control of trade, a combining of all combinations, every business combination and trust, in their ascending order, under one ultimate direction making the trade of the country, not a battlefield of contending interests, but an organism in which each plays its part, its good work helping the good work of every other, and the common success becoming the common profit, as already it is in each lesser concern. We wait only for the extension of the principle upon which every business is worked to trade as a whole; for the last conquest by the spirit

of community as against unmerciful self-interest.

That may appear distant and too simple to be true. But commerce moves that way. Competition is compelling combination. Unrestricted individualism has worked itself out during the last hundred years until it has become unworkable. It is dying of its own results. Everywhere there is either a looking for a change, or already a new method; where the traveller finds it always harder to get orders against cut prices, and the Courts are full of small trade-debtors: and on the other hand, where the capitalist forms his great amalgamations, or the workman talks of Syn-

dicalism; both that they may put an end to disastrous competition, for different purposes no doubt, in a community of interests. The business man has begun to expect a change and to use new methods. The last step may still be far distant; but it is not difficult to see the coming of commercial communism, through combinations, working arrangements, trusts, syndicalism, co-partnerships, municipal trading. All are signs of the search for mercy.

But they say: If you destroy the each-for-himself, you remove the impulse which forces the best man to the top: you are flying in the face of nature, which made the

world by the survival of the fittest. The reply crowds in: The strong man works because he must, because his force of character must have its outlet; because his ability carries him to command. But he will work as thoroughly for the community as for himself; at the head of a national army or navy, as well as in his private interest. It is not self-seeking, but force of character which makes him great. The Christian morality does not wish him weak and careless, but strenuous for the community. Put it to a very simple test: Is your best work done for money, or because you love it? And if it is true that the natural law requires men

to fight for their own hand and converts society into a jungle of wild beasts, if that is the law of the world, then Jesus said: "My Kingdom is not of this world," "Thy Kingdom come," and Christianity has to bring another law into real expression here. It has to find the political path by which mercy and meekness may go to inherit the earth. Individualism, self-interest, is its enemy: the growing spirit of community its hope.

VII

"As Thyself"

"BLESSED are ye poor" and "Blessed are the meek" both seem to imply common wealth and common control, and so does that third saying, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," in which He agreed that the whole duty of man to man is summed up. "As thyself"—then there must be absolute equality between myself and my neighbour in all opportunity. The two words kill every privilege, of birth or class. How can we be loving him as ourself while we con-

sent to his lack and to our unequal excess? As myself, bred in sunlight and gentleness, while he was nursed on the door-step in ugly streets? And if we look back upon the shining days on the field, the great hours with books, the talk in common-rooms where we grew to ideals and saw visions which have always gone with us; the things which so many others never saw nor heard; the things we never connected with such as they are, until afterwards we found them and knew them and realised their lack of what is precious to any man; we begin to think that our life, unconsciously, was an indifference, little better than hate of our neighbour.

"As thyself" is fundamental and simple: a love which walks equally with the fisherman and the rich ruler: a will that any man should be as we have been at our highest; the determination to disperse those old-worldly vanities which love themselves without even a sense of humour, as though, really, Heaven and Earth and the Waters under the Earth were created as a stage for the little family on the edge of "society," or for the bundle of sables driving down Fifth Avenue.

"As thyself"; then every man must have the health, and housing, and education which we have had. But when we come to work for it how can it be? We are not rich

enough, nor influential enough, to provide a life like the best for all. Even if we subscribe to funds the money is poured into a bottomless sea. Even if half society set about lifting up the have-nots to an equal level of privilege, the other half would still bear them down. No individual however powerful and generous is equal to the task of remaking the sad conditions of the unprivileged. It can never be the work of private living nor effort. If we are ever to love our neighbour as ourself, really and practically, it will only be by creating a public opinion which can make the Christian ideal a reality, as we in our individual weakness never can.

It will only be by creating, and submitting to, the paramount power of a Christianised state, which shall give every one freely all that is necessary for the full development of his life. Neither you nor I alone can ever set up the new conditions under which we could feel that others were in fact living as ourselves. But we can work and compel the community towards a common wealth, where I shall have no more privilege than another, and he no more than I.

I am not one of the Utopia-builders. They have all been false prophets, because the world grows its own way. Society is not a machine of which one lays down a

plan and builds to it, but an organism, which grows, like a tree, by the spirit in it; which indeed we may feed and cultivate well or ill, according to our understanding of its life, but whose form in perfection no one can foretell. While, then, one may see the progress and tendency of social life, how it is passing from individualism towards community, it is not possible to describe its final form; how exactly we shall be governed, how live together; how work out the detail of our salvation. The tree of social evolution puts forth a branch here and a leaf there. New Acts of Parliament or Congress open up a larger liberty; fixing a minimum

wage; freeing a larger education. It grows here a little, and there a little. But until it is full-grown no one knows what it will be, altogether and complete. Only there seems to be a becoming, a growing into the general likeness of our hope. The next advance will reveal itself, and the final perfection, in its own time.

I suppose that it is grave sin in the Christian to pray "Thy Kingdom come" and disbelieve that his Lord's will must revolutionise society. But, in darker moods, our slowness of heart makes the hope all but incredible. Perhaps for a hundred who are ready a thousand live by catch-words and prejudices,

reheard and repeated, while God's truth goes by unnoticed. To shake the sleeper only rouses him to ill-temper. So often one hears the bitterness of those who will not wake. Or comforts drag men back. Perhaps the money is breeding money in business, and they begin to spend and give, and, with no consciously selfish motive, resent the pushing and overturning of others; their heart hardens, without their knowing it, against what may behind it have the spirit of Jesus. The thorns spring up and choke them. Or some would be still fighting the old battles, fought and won already, and are not easily drawn on to other fellow-

ships. The old ways which brought them stern victories seem more manly than the newer approaches and understandings in the churches or politics; seem suspect, and a little disloyal in their eyes. Or, the dead-weight of customs, and inbred attitudes of class and tradition which only die out with the generation which lives by them, hold back the current. It must sap imperceptibly and even then the stream flows thinly. It is as though it were the nature of life to tire and harden into immovable forms as its outbursts die away. Or, there is that impenetrability of mind, with its excuses, in hosts, bad and indifferent, against the ex-

tension of privilege: The poor are all drunken blackguards: Any man by industry and thrift can rise to the top: Why spoil the children with pianos, and the immigrant laborers with baths? Why make men discontented? Why stir up class hatreds? Why talk about the good of the soul when no one knows anything about God and Immortality and spirit?—a favourite unreason of those who never tried to learn. Why busy oneself about such things, when life can be lived comfortably? The spirit of progress has to contend against so many ignorances and insensibilities. Sometimes it seems incredible that society can become Christian.

Yet anything is possible to faith: and faith is not believing in the obviously impossible, but an energy from an inexhaustible source. It is will and mind inspired of God. It does move the mountains of inertia. When belief penetrates a life it is very ready to spread, and begins to work itself out into reason, and so to desire and will; and presently the man of faith finds himself speaking of it; and, perhaps to his surprise, others respond, and the company grows and organises and becomes a great power which gathers up all kinds of people, so that to-day in nearly every civilised country or in worlds lately heathen a belief in a new brother-

hood, equal and pacific, undermines the old order and shakes men out of their comfort. The new spirit is overturning the world. Call it what you will—it may be mixed with bad motives, dangerous in its excesses—but if this thing were not from God He would have brought it to nought. And if the coming of the Kingdom tarries because of the hardness of our hearts, God's patience is the sign of final assurance. If He were not sure of victory He would not have spared the world so long.

But if it still seems incredible and impossible that our faith should compel us to rebuild society upon another foundation, if it

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startles us as an immediate political aim, then have we indeed suffered the great change of mind which subverts the whole world? Maybe we have become converted towards God; but is our mind changed towards men? Have the words of Jesus about loving one's neighbour as oneself burnt themselves into life, as though Jesus really meant what He said, that we are to love our neighbour, really and practically, as ourself, no soft amiability—Jesus was not a sentimentalist—but a will of the whole man to insist, by overturning society, if need be, that every one shall have all that the Christian knows to be lovable and good for

himself? That Jesus meant, without qualification, that there must be actual equality in every good thing between ourselves and the most unfortunate of men? Has His thought so gone with us always, so changed the world for us, that the practical failure of our neighbour-love troubles us all day long and we cannot rest until society is remade and it is possible to be completely Christian? And do we really want to be poor and earn that blessing? And really want to share the best of life with all? If not, is our Christianity more than sentiment? Have we dared to fathom the whole mind of Jesus and to make it our political ideal?

VIII

Duties

THE teaching of Jesus seems, then, to look towards common wealth; the condition under which it will be possible to be poor without starving life; to be merciful in business; and really to be loving our neighbour as ourself. For when society has taken the control of wealth so far into its own hands, men could live out their life, live out their soul, be neither halt nor maimed nor blind, and still be poor: and when it has so controlled

trade that every worker serves, not himself, nor a private master, but the community, self-interest in trade would cease—an ideal, very distant no doubt, but we are none the less conscious of a trend that way. The Liberal, putting forward the reforms which the occasion seems to require, is no longer the individualist of earlier days who left personal liberty and competition to work out their social results; experience has shown him the necessity, in some measure, large or small, of state control, over hours of work, and conditions and wages; over the possession of wealth itself. He is in the stream which moves towards common

wealth. So conservatism has become a troubled consciousness of the real existence and power of the same movement. Whether we fear it, or whether we see in it the sign of the coming of the Kingdom of Heaven upon earth, it is the preoccupation of political thought today.

Self-interest enters largely into our feeling. An income diminished by the taxation which is building the common wealth makes the movement a personal concern. Perhaps there is some relief to reluctance in the thought that the Kingdom of Heaven grows like the little yeast in the loaf. Not suddenly will it overturn society, and

maybe there is always room for those who dread to go too fast. They are the brake which prevents the speed which overturns the car of state. But yet, to hang back too much, to be too little willing, has its great dangers. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth." The force is always gathering, the pressure rising; in discontents, strikes, murmurings: and if there be no outlet the explosion will wreck all that caution wished to save. For it is obvious, very disquieting, that the discontent of those who have discovered that they might have much

that the rich man enjoys grows louder, with a note of anger, and that it becomes always more conscious of its power. To beat back the tide is foolishness: besides, we may be fighting against God. He may this way be leading us back from our fallen selfishness to the original unity.

But if willingly, or unwillingly, sooner or later, the Christian honestly trying to understand the mind of Jesus is forced to think that his political idea must be some such condition as this, then there are immediate duties before him. First, to see his own property and a common wealth, with mercy and neighbour-love, steadfastly and clearly as

the ideal; to become accustomed to the thought until, losing all its strangeness and fear and gathering its proof from daily events and the better understood life and words of Jesus and His nearer followers, it grows welcome and reasonable, as old habits of thought fall away: then, to be himself poor in spirit, poor so far as possible now in fact; merciful too and loving; and, last, to put himself right politically.

Of the first little perhaps need be further said. A new thought, a thought perhaps unwelcome, when it has become familiar, changes its appearance. Because it is hard it is all the better as an ideal. Living much with us it grows strangely

simple. We begin to say: Of course He meant it, and, if it is difficult, what more likely? "How very hard it is to be a Christian."

Of the second duty there can perhaps be no perfect fulfilment now. Any Christian may be poor in spirit, having no heart for riches; the note of his life may be simplicity and disregard of personal advantage. So far he fulfils the ideal now. For it comes home to him with a pang of conscience, what right has he to his gay house and good cheer while there are women earning three dollars a week working fourteen hours a day in one unhealthy room? In them the Christian sees Him, hungry and

naked and in prison, and if he shuts his eyes there is that fierce condemnation of those who said, "Lord! Lord!" and went on enjoying their wealth. Perhaps we do not pray unctuously and live on slum rents; we have not crushed out trade rivals; nor said in our hearts that business is business; ours may not be the life which makes men hate and rail at the churches: but there is the plain command to be poor in spirit, poor in fact. But is it possible while society is still unchanged? If a man has children and divests himself of the means to provide them with a reasonably healthy home and the best education he can af-

ford, he sins, surely, against his nearest neighbour. They are his to care for, not in luxury; but he must comfort them and prepare their spiritual life with those sufficient things which he would have all men enjoy. Must they grow up ignorant and narrow-minded, maimed, halt, blind? That would be his sin. If he has not the means, as no man has, of giving to all men what is best, at least according to his power he must do his duty to the few of his own household. That indeed is less that the perfect ideal of poverty: to some it may seem like consenting to evil; a bowing down in the house of Rimmon; like being content with less than

full salvation. But is not this the true thought, that no one can be perfectly saved alone; that we can never do the will of God utterly until it is done everywhere on earth, as in heaven: that indeed we have no right to be over-concerned that we may be released from the temptation of the world until the same salvation is possible to all? For men are one; we stand and fall together; we cannot be perfect Christians singly, but as the body of Christ; and until the whole body is perfect, the single members remain in imperfection. Few of us can live rightly in utter poverty, until society is changed. But meanwhile if he cannot yet be poor in fact,

delivered altogether from the temptation of dying things, the Christian can attain the spirit of poverty. He has no excuse for luxury; for preoccupation in money-making; for blindness towards the soul. And he has no excuse for forgetting the larger duty. It must be always upon his conscience; the sense of the presence and pressure of the ideal, though it seems unfulfilled now. He has to make it possible, for every one, some day soon.

So he is led to his third, and political duty, in the knowledge that it is not all so much a matter of his own gain, but that the spirit of Jesus comes as a social salvation, not of one nor a few, but of society

as a whole. And that can only be by political action. Parliament alone can set up the common wealth which will take away the disabilities that make poverty unholy now, and establish mercy in business, and neighbour-love. The Christian has to go down with his ideal into the political fight.

It is easy to say hard things about party politics and politicians, and that it is a common theme is a good sign of general repentance. We are growing tired of politics for party's sake, of the fire without light which comforts no one except those who receive their reward. Politics are becoming more real; less oratorical; less of a career, and

more of a service: and with the change and discounting of ambition the personal bitterness decreases. Perhaps we still wish for our opponents a gentler heart, or a brighter wit, deliverance from invincible ignorance; but we hardly think of them as personal enemies. If they cannot see humanity beyond patriotism, they are still patriots; if they do not see the soul beyond material prosperity, the larger vision may yet be theirs. The only enemy is the man who isolates himself in self-interest, who breaks up the unity of men; who is not a brother, but a traitor, in the state. The last division is between self-interest and love. It strikes down

to the root of good and evil. Love and pride divide heaven from hell; and here, in politics, it is the ultimate and irreconcilable division. One seems to foresee that the last battle, the political Armageddon, will be fought out between love and pride. But among those that have the goodwill there is room for the tolerance of many temperaments, conservative, liberal, socialistic, if at least they all pity and love.

The Christian's immediate test of man and measures political is simple then: this man who seeks my vote, is he with us or against us? We do not ask whether his creed is ours, nor even whether he has interpreted the mind of Jesus

as we did—that would be very well if it were so—but at least has he pity and love? Or is he looking for a judgeship or a senatorship, or a chance of sitting at the dinner-tables of the rich and powerful? Even if his politics seem right he is not for us, for self-interest in the end will master his politics. But how whole-heartedly could we follow the strong, practical man, who, seeing the two worlds as Jesus saw them and knowing that character in the people, the soul which survives, is the object of all well-being, said so, boldly, and asked our vote on that ground only; the man whose religion is all his policy.

So with the measures of the day.

Do they run with the thought of Jesus? Is there love in them and pity? Are they only for party advantage, appealing to self-interest? No further question is needed to divide right from wrong; and when between two good measures we look for some nearer test, then the Christian's last ideal, that personal poverty and neighbour-love made perfect and real in a commonwealth, starts up to try which is the better. If in the words of Jesus we have found the implication of such an ultimate society then it must be always there, the touchstone of all things; of a new bill or the latest political move. So tried by a constant ideal, politics

become easy; the Christian knows what he wants; what Jesus wants of him.

But there remains this, perhaps the most difficult question between the Christian and his politics. Certainly he can join himself to an existing party, and there is always a misfortune in multiplying means; but can he give himself wholeheartedly to Conservatism, or Progressivism, or Prohibitionism, or Suffragism, or Socialism? Do they not all, in one vital need, fail him? No one of them openly and frankly bases its programme upon a spiritual hope; and those to whom that hope is everything can never be at ease until they have taken their

stand together upon the true ground. If the Christian too nearly identifies himself with other ideals; if he finds in his adopted party no expressed and open Christian bond, nor declaration first and foremost of a more logical and practical motive than any desire satisfied here, he may forget his ground, or come to neglect it, and so fall into the unreason of the world. He needs a fellowship, not at war with other parties, nor spoiled by party spirit; ready indeed always to join with others in common purposes; but a fellowship which before the world professes, in its politics, a faith which no other party has yet acknowledged.

When he has made the unworldliness of Jesus his own, and turned the world upside down, and carried its centre beyond dying things, has wholly abandoned, as he must, all other perishable hopes and let the true hope invade all his thoughts, no lesser faith can satisfy him. Even if many in other parties are on the right side, still their party cries are not unworldly: to him they are incomplete, illogical, unsafe.

Then, again, does any party go to the length of the Christian ideal? Conservatism, at its best, means the preservation of existing order; slow changes, if any. It is afraid of subversions. How do we know,

it says, if all that you desire comes to pass, that men will be the happier? It seems to lack faith; as though better days were unlikely and man's visions were delusive, not inspired of God: as though God had given up the lost world: as though society were not a living, growing thing, but a mechanism not to be tampered with lest it burst in pieces. Is not that little faith impossible to those who have the sense of the Kingdom of Heaven ready to break out into the world, if men were willing? Has the conservative Christian understood how the Spirit of God moves everywhere, as in the Church, so in the world, which, in its discontents and

disorders, groans and labours towards a new creation?

Liberal thought again, though it has many shades, is still coloured by individualism. Its scheme is liberty, of thought, of religious belief, of commercial enterprise; and it has the true credit of having overturned many tyrannies. But its essential concern is for the rights of the individual. It defends the man against unfair burdens; against the landlord, or the privileged church or class. It is a demand for justice —that second-rate virtue—the eye for an eye, the tooth for a tooth, which Jesus never praised: and perhaps, with some, a little lack-

ing in imagination, the rights of others, or the overright of the community, do not weigh so strongly in the balance against the suffering they have themselves borne. With that bias of mind it is not always easy to question one's own privileges, the right to the power or wealth which our free energy has won for us. The admiration of liberty is sometimes hurt by the suggestion of the greater right of the community: or that no right must ever become privilege; or that society may interfere with a man's business or personal expenditure. It begins to talk about grandmotherly legislation or government by an army of officials. Per-

haps it is true to say that Liberalism does not always see society as one; that it is individualistic, imperfectly communistic. Again, it has, it seems, no final ideal. Here and there, where an abuse is urgent, it does its work; but not with a sure purpose towards a state of society which it long ago imagined and is always working for. It is opportunist; therefore random rather; and so far less effectual than a further-sighted policy might be. It has not the clear vision which saves politics from by-ways.

So it is, perhaps because of a sense of this defect, that Liberalism shades off into Socialism; for the socialist knows what he wants,

he has a theory and a Utopia; and his ideals look very like the neighbour-love, expressed in community, which we believe is implied in our Lord's teaching. It is the party which tempts many Christians, to which many profess adhesion. In practice the Christian is often with the socialist. He might be with him whole-heartedly but for the doubt that Socialism, abroad in Germany and France, at home and in English-speaking countries, though not so markedly, is materialistic, dislikes religion, perhaps not unreasonably because so often the churches seem to fight for privilege. If it had a new knowledge of what Christianity means to its followers,

if it were captured by the spiritual impulse, it might yet be, it may be, a political expression of Christianity; and if a Christian may do a work of more use to-day than any other, it would be to convince the great mass of Socialism that the one thing it lacks is the knowledge of the futility of materialistic hopes, a sense of God and the soul, an understanding of Jesus.

Meanwhile men of like thoughts draw together and begin to work together, inevitably if the principle which binds them is not present in its purity elsewhere. Others are not against them, nor yet altogether on their side. The Church can only be satisfied with its own

more perfect knowledge of what life is. In that knowledge it must have a policy of its own. It should be enough for a man to say that he is a Christian and every one should know his politics; that he has made the mind of Jesus his own; His supreme concern for the soul; His ideals of personal poverty—the freedom from the desire of dying things; of mercy in all relations; of real neighbour-love. All Christians belong to the Church Militant; not yet, perhaps, with a single policy and ideal, though every day one sees and reads the signs of awakening purpose, the call to service from many quarters. The Church, with the driving power of

faith, can in the end have no rival. It may swallow up all parties; be the one great party. If it moves weakly it is because Christianity is divided and has not yet wholly understood, nor accepted, the mind of Jesus. But even now Christian principles can be the sole politics of a growing number. Whatever their present parties, they have a common spirit which must draw them into a more satisfying fellowship.

IX

The Church and the World

A LAST thought remains, and leads back to the beginning: Jesus left His Church in the world, but is she there only to send out her Christians to change the world into the image of her Lord's ideal? or is she something more, peculiar and unworldly? Has she not a larger and ultimate mission, looking beyond the world? While we are gone away upon the work every steeple points to heaven, and every sound of singing through open doors answers the old ques-

tions, whence men come and whither they go, why they suffer and for what are we at work.

For we need something more from the Church than the stimulus to politics: we ask for an unshakable reason for it all. Consider—it is a good thing to stand aside or be compelled to rest for a time, and so as the quieted mind clears to find ourselves asking what we were so busy about, the last question—if all that we seek were realised, what then? If our Lord's ideals became realities, in some future age when men were poor and merciful and shared together all good things, what then? Sometimes we seem to work as though the end were

here; but, if so, the ground trembles under our feet. Just as our own life is meaningless if bodily death ends all, and our struggling to be the best that lies in us would be wasted when we die, so, on a greater and more dreadful scale, all effort, however rightly aimed, however Christian, to better man's state, is wasted if it looks for an earthly result, because the Earth is no more immortal than our body.

There is a star in Orion which seems fainter, vaguer, than its neighbours. It is in fact a nebula coiled and scattered through space vaster by far than the length and breadth of the solar system. They say that it is a universe in birth.

Out of such a cosmic cloud the sun and its planets were formed. Through time so long as to be meaningless to thought the nebula contracted, and grew hot, and threw off stars, lesser or greater, circling about the central sun. According to their mass so was the life of the stars. The Sun is still a fire immeasurably hot: the planet Jupiter is still cloud and vapour not yet become solid. But the Earth is past her youth; long ago the outer cold froze upon her surface, and filled her shrunken sides with seas, and clothed her in the blue mantle of air. Upon her breast life came up, fish and bird and beast, and man last of all.

Her old age and death are foretold in the nearer skies. The asteroids swimming in nameless multitudes through outworn orbits died long ago because they were little. Mars our neighbour is very old: already his seas are dried up; there is no water there except in the ice-caps of the poles; the planet's surface seems a dry plain of red-brown sand. Schiaparelli and Lowell have thought that the curious lines, the "canals" they called them, may be tracks of harvest fields beside water-ways led down across the long deserts from the polar ice. If there are living creatures there, like ourselves perhaps but older, wiser—for the water-ways, if such

they are, pass unbroken over all their world as though universal peace were there—they live by the summer melting of the polar ice. But the ice shrinks, and if the harvests fail their end is not far away.

Nearer still Earth's death is foretold. The Moon is without air and water, cold and barren. As she is, so Earth will be. The cold of space will chill her heart, the water fail, the atmosphere shrink; and man, some day when all his labour has at last brought happiness and social justice, will pass away for ever. What then are we working for? Is our fate, not a tragedy, but an unspeakable stupidity?

Any matter seems a stupidity if one sees only half of it. If we only know this world, life of course is foolishness. But when we see it as Jesus did, it becomes right and reasonable; for He said that there was another world, beyond, within, overshadowing and interpenetrating the dying world, a life, soul, spirit, for which this world is. What should it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his soul? What shall it profit humanity if they make the dying earth a paradise and cast away their imperishable part? No thought which recognises only this world can answer the question why we suffer and why we work, nor escape from

the dilemma of human mortality. Only when with Jesus we have seen the two worlds can we find hope in life and death, man's suffering and trial, and the ideals which drive us to work.

What did He say about suffering and work? God is our Father, in the heavens, of another plane and order; Spirit, whose children we are. And as children He deals with us. Ourselves, if we are wise, so deal with our sons and daughters. We might make their life perfectly easy and painless; if we are foolish, wrap them away from all necessity of effort. We might give them all that they want, as some say God, if he would,

might give us all we have not. But we should condemn ourselves if we so dealt with our own children; so spoilt them; without independence, with everything done for them, and every trial which makes strong character kept from them, they grow up poor creatures. God, in His wisdom and love, is no worse father than we are; so it is that He does not do everything for us, but leaves us to work out our salvation, overcoming by our own effort and increasing knowledge the diseases of the body, the ignorances of the mind, the social iniquities, which are indeed troubles, but stepping-stones to power and character. Out of his trials and vic-

tories man that was a child grows to be a Son of God knowing good and evil, because His Father, wise and loving, leaves him to fight his own battles. But even that is only half the truth, for the Kingdom in the heavens, the spiritual plane and order, enters into this world, is within us, and in it we are comforted in sorrow, strengthened in work, and there store up the everlasting gain. Our outward conditions are but the school of the soul; this world is for the other, body for soul; earth's life for the spiritual order. Neither is any sorrow nor trial more than we can bear. Even if we die of it *We* do not die; it is only that the old half-blind thought

that death is the end of all things, still deceives us. If we saw it as God may, as the opening into something larger, the leaving school, an episode in life, we should think of it with gladness. So, as Jesus revealed Him, God is our Father; Earth is the school of the soul; its sorrows make character; He leaves us to fight our battles for our own good; He comforts our spirit and when we see life whole we may understand His goodness, whence we come and whither we go, why man suffers. And why we work to better the earthly life, are politicians and social reformers? Because the better the school the better the scholar: the stronger the body and

mind the greater the opportunity of spiritual gain: because the only justification of political ideals is that they make character and soul. Other justification we have none: body and brain perish, the world passes away, only spiritual gain is worth working for.

That we may easily forget in our business with politics, and it is to this that the Church is witness. Though she sends her people out to work and change society she has herself a larger duty; to be an everlasting answer to the reason of work, why we are here, why we do good.

In the old metaphor, man's soul passes through this world a trav-

eller in a foreign land. If any set up their tent in a pleasant place, or grow weary, the Church calls to them: This is not your rest; here we have no abiding city: and no soul that understands would wish to stay, for the other land is much better. Though Great-Heart makes the rough places smoother and the journey easier, it is not that the foreign land may become so pleasant as to detain the travellers, but that they may be hastened on their way. The way will always be hard. There will be dark valleys where some one vanished; long hills where the heart laboured; waste places and dryness; and friends who went another way.

But every traveller who reached the end went home the manlier, and made the path more plain for others; so that there are always more who go down confidently to the last black river and climb out upon the other side at the foot of the shining city. And as they go up to the gate they know why they were sent on that journey, because they are stronger grown through hardships than when they set out. It was a stern and rugged place and in its gloom they were often near to forgetting and doubted the King's goodness, but now it is all made clear, and even the dark river was not really dreadful.

What shall it profit a man if he

lose his soul? Blessed are the poor, for theirs is the undying Kingdom. He healed the disabled and evil-haunted. He would have every man whole and sane, and poor, for his soul's sake. And blessed are mercy and neighbour-love. Then, His will is not done until the best has become ours and every man's, whatever it mean; until we have made life's good a common wealth, surrendering our privilege, accepting His poverty. To be delivered from the desire of dying things; to share the best of life with all men, so to help them on the way; is not that the wisdom not of this world?

THE END

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